A LOVER OF BEAUTY

experience were being unveiled; such experiences of love and loss as enriched the poorest life beyond the convent gate, but had never even touched the dreams of this cloistered spirit. The monk knew not,—what mothers divine at the first touch of helpless hands,—that love grows through its own giving; and though he now gave himself tirelessly to the dying lad, he did not realize that the tendrils of this fading life were growing ever more closely about his heart. He wondered that the touch of the weak fingers seemed ever warm upon his hand,—that the white face followed him about his tasks, as the face of the Christ had been wont to do,—but knew not that this meant love; such love as mothers and fathers in the world beyond the garth felt for their sons and daughters,—such love as bears ever folded within it the pain of loss.

The anguish of Nathaniel’s second awakening came in late November; when one evening, as the bell rang for vespers, all quietly, all painlessly, the little novice went from them, drifting away, with the setting sun, to the new dawn they could not see. Slowly, heavily, after his night of pain, with that strange new sense of hunger and of loss, Nathaniel in the early dawn stumbled blindly forth to his accustomed tasks. But at the threshold of the bake-house he paused, and a great stillness,—a great wonder,—fell upon his numbed heart; the Presence that had long since gone from him, the Christ-face his hardness had banished,—smiled upon him from the doorway.

"THE SOWER" OF MILLET

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HE night is about to fall and to spread abroad its gray veils over the brown land. The sower marches in rhythmic step, casting the grain into the furrow, and he is followed by a flight of pilfering birds; gloomy rags are his covering; his head is coiffed by a sort of bizarre bonnet; he is bony and meagre underneath this livery of poverty, and yet life spreads from his broad hand, and with a proud gesture he, who has nothing, is spreading over the earth the bread of the future. At the other side of the hill, a last ray of light shows a pair of oxen coming to the end of their furrow, strong and gentle companions of man, whose reward will one day be their butchery. This glimmer is the only clair of the picture bathed in a sorrowful shadow and presenting to the eyes only, under a sky of clouds, a black soil newly torn by the plow." (Théophile Gautier.)